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SUBJECT: TURKEY: COMPREHENSIVE EU ANTI-TIP PROJECT LAUNCHED

¶1. (U) In a standing room-only ceremony March 19, Turkish Ministry of Interior (MOI) Deputy Under Secretary Alim Barum, IOM Chief of Mission Maurizio Busatti, and European Commission Delegation Institution Building and Civil Society Section Head Michael Vogel inaugurated a two-year, three million euro comprehensive anti-TIP project, "Supporting Turkey's Efforts to Combat Human Trafficking and Promote Access to Justice for all Trafficked Persons." The EU-funded project -- a follow-up to the EU-Turkey Twinning Project, "Strengthening Institutions in the Fight Against TIP" -- will be implemented in cooperation with IOM Turkey and aims to comprehensively support Turkish institutions in their fight against TIP, primarily by expanding victim protection in line with EU council directives and harmonization with the EU acquis. (A project overview will be e-mailed separately to G/TIP.)

¶2. (U) The project's implementation began December 1, 2007. It will build on the already strong NGO and interagency cooperation Turkey enjoys on TIP, and the impending adoption of Turkey's new national action plan. The project has six objectives:

- Strengthening the national taskforce's administrative capacity in order to make communication and cooperation among members more efficient;
- Conducting prevention and awareness raising activities in Turkey and source countries to reduce the stigma associated with TIP and to promote the 157 helpline;
- Increasing victim identification, and strengthening the investigation and prosecution of traffickers;
- Improving victim protection in Turkey by strengthening the existing infrastructure and developing new mechanisms;
- Improving understanding of the demand for different forms of TIP, including forced prostitution, and the development of measures to counteract demand;
- Establishing a data gathering network to promote a coordinated approach to TIP between Turkey and the main source countries.

¶3. (U) Within these objectives, the project coordinators are targeting an ambitious set of key deliverables:

- Sustained funding for the "157" helpline and the Ankara and Istanbul TIP shelters;
- A national and multi-country TIP information campaign and "157" helpline promotion;
- "Train the trainer" course for thirty MOI and Ministry of Justice (MOJ) officials on victim identification and interviewing techniques;
- TIP training for 280 "first contact" law enforcement

officers;
-- Year-long Russian and English language training for fifty law enforcement officers plus additional certified translators for TIP "hotspots;"
-- Enhanced cooperation with municipal bar associations (public defenders);
-- Regional and European study trips and workshops;
-- Improved MOJ data collection and enhanced regional data sharing;
-- Turkish Penal Code Article 80 (newly amended anti-trafficking article) curriculum;
-- "Train the trainer" TIP workshops for forty judges and prosecutors who will subsequently train over 1,500 judges and prosecutors;
-- Two mutual legal assistance seminars between Turkey and source country officials; and
-- Baseline survey on trafficking demand in Turkey.

14. (SBU) The GOT's adoption of the new National Action Plan (NAP) will be key to the project's success, Project Manager Helen Nilsson told us March 31. Currently, the NAP is awaiting Prime Ministry approval and translation into English. The NAP has been delayed by months now, and there are concerns that political upheavals in Turkey could further slow its adoption. Nilsson, who has been seconded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) to oversee the project's implementation, stressed, however, that the project coordinators are nonetheless pushing forward. Veteran Scotland Yard detective and renowned international TIP expert Paul Holmes is in Turkey April 1-2 to participate in "train the trainers" exercises for law enforcement officers. A feasibility study will soon be launched to help identify ways in which to improve the effectiveness of the TIP national taskforce and the coordinator's role. The taskforce already represents a wide

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cross-section of national and local government, IGOs and NGOs, and is meeting every other month. Nilsson predicted that the feasibility study will advise the coordinator to break-up the taskforce into smaller, more operable working groups to address key issues.

15. (SBU) Nilsson emphasized the importance of the awareness campaigns scheduled to begin nationally in May 2008 and regionally in 2009. A top Istanbul-based advertising firm is developing a high-quality TV, radio and poster campaign. Expanding the campaign regionally will have the benefit of more effectively communicating to potential victims and their families in source countries the risks of trafficking and the services available to victims if they are trafficked to Turkey. The 157 helpline is already accessible internationally and the regional awareness campaign will convey this more widely. The GOT, according to Nilsson and Turkish National Police (TNP) contacts, is already in the process of transitioning operational responsibility for the helpline from IOM to TNP; funding has been authorized and an applicants' questionnaire is being developed. Nilsson also noted that both police and Jandarma (Gendarmerie) have shown great enthusiasm for the Russian and English language training. The capacity for Turkish authorities to address potential victims in a language they can understand will go a long way toward easing victims' fear and could lead to better cooperation between victims and Turkish law enforcement and judicial authorities.

16. (SBU) The EU project will aim to bolster the Turkish judiciary's capacity to fight TIP. Some source country officials visiting Turkey have noted that judicial cooperation with Turkish officials does not always transpire as efficiently and effectively as it could. Two mutual legal assistance seminars with source country officials will be held, each involving thirty Turkish and foreign participants. Study visits for Turkish officials to EU and source countries will also take place. Moreover, the project coordinators will oversee the training of forty judicial

trainers and the subsequent training of 1,500 judges and prosecutors on the recently-amended Article 80 criminalizing TIP with eight to twelve years' imprisonment. In addition, a separate Dutch and SIDA-funded project aimed at improving the local bar associations' capacities to deliver, sensitively, legal services to TIP victims is already underway.

COMMENT: TAKING TURKEY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

17. (SBU) Our EU contacts maintain that Turkish interagency, NGO and IGO cooperation on TIP is strong, exceeding that on other issues in the Justice and Home Affairs chapter (chapter 24) of the EU acquis. While sometimes vacillating on other key EU political and economic reforms, the GOT has reached a rare consensus on the importance of TIP and is proving a willing and able partner and a regional leader. The EU project has excellent potential for success: it builds on Turkey's strengths and comprehensively addresses remaining weaknesses, ensuring sustainable and self-supporting victim protection mechanisms. This ambitious project will be a big part of Turkey's anti-TIP performance over the next three years and we will monitor its implementation closely.

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WILSON